

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJ: MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS: DEPARTMENT'S ORGANIZATION,
ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES; REQUEST FOR MULTILATERAL
INFORMATION ON HOST GOVERNMENTS

REF: STATE 037591

1. THE FOLLOWING RESPONSES ARE KEYED TO THE LETTERED SUB-PARAGRAPHS
IN THE REFTEL:

(A) VENEZUELA'S PRIMARY MULTILATERAL INTERESTS WILL CENTER ON
CIEC AND OPEC DURING 1976. IN THE FIRST, PEREZ GUERRERO'S
OBJECTIVES ARE TO MAINTAIN G-19 UNITY ABOVE ALL ELSE AND RECORD
MEASURABLE PROGRESS TOWARD A NIEO (SOME PROGRESS BEFORE UNCTAD).
HE WILL PROBABLY BE SATISFIED WITH RELATIVE MODERATE PROGRESS - BUT
ONLY IF THE RADICALS CAN BE KEPT IN CHECK. IN OPEC VENEZUELA WILL
CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR SOME FORM OF PRODUCTION PRO-RATING, A
PRIME NATIONAL OBJECTIVE. VENEZUELA'S INTERESTS IN THE UN AND ITS
ALLIED BODIES WILL ONCE AGAIN FOCUS ON THIRD-WORLD UNITY WITH
RESPECT TO ECONOMIC QUESTIONS, AND ON AVOIDING POLITICAL CON-
FRONTATIONS WHICH COULD DAMAGE THAT UNITY OR COMPLICATE NEGOTIATIONS
WITH THE DC'S. IN SELA AND THE OAS THE OBJECTIVE WILL BE TO BUILD
LATIN AMERICAN SOLIDARITY WITH AN APPROPRIATE BUT NOT OVERWHELMING
LEADERSHIP ROLE FOR VENEZUELA. WE ARE UNAWARE OF ANY SPECIAL
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GOV INTEREST IN INDIVIDUAL CANDIDANCIES FOR POSITIONS IN MULTI-

LATERAL ORGANS.

(B) GOV MULTILATERAL POLICY-MAKING IS STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY ITS PRIORITY OBJECTIVES OF MAINTAINING OPEC UNITY, LATIN AMERICAN SOLIDARITY AND G-77 CONCORD (IN THAT ORDER OF IMPORTANCE). INFLUENCE OF PARTICULAR COUNTRIES EXERTS ITSELF IN A NEGATIVE SENSE: I.E., IF AN ISSUE IS IMPORTANT TO A COUNTRY IMPORTANT TO VENEZUELA, AND IF THE GOV WOULD NORMALLY BE ON THE OTHER SIDE, AN EFFORT IS MADE TO FIND NEUTRAL GROUND. SAUDI ARABIA, IRAN AND, TO MUCH LESSER EXTENT, MEXICO ARE IMPORTANT IN THAT REGARD. AS A GENERAL RULE, VENEZUELA SEEKS LATIN AMERICAN AND THIRD-WORLD CONSENSUS. THE GOV WILL EMPLOY ITS INFLUENCE TO FASHION A MODERATE CONSENSUS IN KEEPING WITH THIS COUNTRY'S ESSENTIALLY MODERATE POLITICAL OUTLOOK. BUT THE GOV IS MOST UNLIKELY TO TAKE STRONG INITIATIVES ON THE MORE HIGHLY-CHARGED INTERNATIONAL ISSUES AND TENDS TO RETREAT TO NEUTRALITY WHEN THE GOING GETS ROUGH.

(C) DELEGATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS ARE WELL BRIEFED ON GOV POLICY AND GENERAL OBJECTIVES. BUT INSTRUCTIONS ARE APPARENTLY SOMEWHAT LESS THAN DETAILED ON OTHER THAN MAJOR ISSUES. DECISIONS ON KEY VOTES MAY BE TAKEN AT THE LAST MINUTE AND RELAYED BY TELEPHONE. THE HAPHAZARD OPERATING PROCEDURES OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND THE WIDE RANGE OF INFLUENCES ON FOREIGN POLICY WITHIN THE GOV SOMETIMES PRODUCE CONFUSED AND CHANGING INSTRUCTIONS. HOWEVER, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF RUNAWAY DELEGATIONS; VENEZUELAN DELEGATES ABROAD FOLLOW THEIR INSTRUCTIONS WHEN THEY HAVE THEM. THE REPORTING TO CARACAS FROM THE UN IS APPARENTLY SOMETIMES SPOTTY, BUT THE GOV IS CLEARLY KEPT UP TO DATE BY THE DELEGATIONS THAT COME UNDER PEREZ GUERRERO'S WING (CIEC, UNCTAD AND THE LIKE).

(D) NO PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OR HEAD OF DELEGATION WOULD DARE TO CHALLENGE THE AUTHORITY PRESIDENT PEREZ WIELDS IN MAKING ALL IMPORTANT FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS. NOR WOULD THE PRESIDENT HESITATE TO FIRE ANY WHO DID, WHATEVER POWER BASE THE OFFENDER MIGHT THINK HE HAD. PEREZ IS HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY PEREZ GUERRERO'S VIEWS ON KEY INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS. FIANCE MINISTER HURTADO, EX-PRESIDENT BETANCOURT, MINES MINISTER HERNANDEZ AND PRESIDENT OF THE CONGRESS GONZALO BARRIOS ALSO HAVE HIS EAR FROM TIME TO TIME. THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND HIS COLLEAGUES IN THE MINISTRY ARE OF LESSER INFLUENCE, IN PART BECAUSE THEY ARE POORLY ORGANIZED AND SEEMINGLY CONFIDENTIAL

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UNABLE TO PUT FORWARD COHERENT POLICY OPTIONS.

(E) THE GOV IS ACCESSIBLE AND WILL LISTEN TO OUR REPRESENTATIONS. BUT THE GOV DOES NOT AT BOTTOM YET ACCEPT THE CONCEPT THAT INTER-ACTION ON THESE ISSUES IS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. THAT RELATIONSHIP FOCUSES ON PETROLEUM WHERE A PRACTICAL AND DISCRETE INTERDEPENDENCE SEEMS OBVIOUS. THE CONCEPT OF INTERACTION CAN PERHAPS BEST BE PROMOTED HERE IN THE CONTEXT

OF US-LDC AND US-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS. THE GOV DOES TAKE ACCOUNT OF OUR VIEWS, BUT WEIGHS MORE SERIOUSLY THE EFFECT OF A GIVEN POSITION ON ITS NATIONAL OBJECTIVES IN OPEC, LATIN AMERICA AND THE THIRD WORLD. EMBASSY-GOV CONSULTATIONS ON LOS MATTERS HAVE IN THE PAST PROVED USEFUL AND WE ARE SUSTAINING A CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH PEREZ GUERRERO'S STAFF AND OTHERS ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES. BUT GENERALLY THE GOV SOLICITS US SUPPORT THROUGH THE EMBASSY ONLY ON ROUTINE MULTILATERAL QUESTIONS, AND INFREQUENTLY TAKES THE INITIATIVE IN DISCUSSIONS OF SUBSTANCE.

2. A FINAL NOTE ON THIS SUBJECT. ENGAGING THE GOV ON THE CRITICAL INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ISSUES IS PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT BECAUSE REAL AUTHORITY AND INFLUENCE WITHIN THE GOV ARE DISPERSED AND PARTIALLY HIDDEN. PEREZ GUERRERO IS OFTEN THE KEY BUT HE CAN AND DOES PLEAD THAT "POLITICAL" QUESTIONS ARE OUTSIDE HIS RESPONSIBILITY. MAKING THE CASE THEN TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY IS OFTEN OF LIMITED UTILITY. WHAT THE EMBASSY NEEDS TO AVOID THIS DEAD END IS MORE TIME TO MAKE OUR VIEWS KNOWN TO OTHER INFLUENTIAL ACTORS IN THE GOV. WITHOUT ADEQUATE ADVANCE WARNING ON THE BIG ISSUES WE WILL BE LESS EFFECTIVE THAN WE SHOULD BE.
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